

Narrator:

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Michelle Obama visited Mexico from April 13th to 15th. It was her first solo official trip abroad as U.S. first lady. She met with another first lady, Mexico's Margarita Zavala de Calderón. The two women share similar backgrounds and interests, especially education and young people.

Mrs. Obama previously met with Mrs. Calderón, wife of Mexican President Felipe Calderón, at the White House on February 25th. They discussed such problems as obesity, diabetes, addictions and the situation of undocumented Mexican minors in the United States. They also met twice in 2009, when accompanying their husbands on official travel: in Rome on July 8th, at the Group of Eight, or G8 Summit, and in Pittsburgh on September 24th, at the G20 Summit.

The two first ladies share backgrounds as accomplished career women. Mrs. Obama is 46 and a Harvard-trained attorney who worked at the University of Chicago Hospitals, first as executive director for community affairs and later as vice president for community and external affairs. She currently serves on the board of directors of the Chicago Council on Global Affairs, a nonpartisan organization featuring experts with diverse views on a wide range of global topics.

Mrs. Calderón is 42, and is also an attorney. She served in the Mexican Legislature from 2003 to 2006. She has worked as a law professor and currently serves as president of an advisory board for el Desarrollo Integral de la Familia, the Integral Development of the Family, which is a government agency that helps to develop and strengthen families in Mexico. She also teaches secondary school students in the private school Asuncion.

In addition to carrying out their official duties, both first ladies are raising children. Mrs. Obama has two daughters, Malia and Sasha, and Mrs. Calderón has a daughter, Maria, and two sons, Luis Felipe and Juan Pablo. The U.S. first lady, who has described her primary role as "mom-in-chief," says that her experience as a mother has fueled her concern for the well-being of all young people.

Mrs. Obama's engagement with young people began early in her tenure as U.S. first lady. In 2009, she established a kitchen garden on the White House grounds and invited students from a Washington school to join her in planting and harvesting fruits, vegetables and herbs. On April 2nd, Mrs. Obama was joined by 45 students from local schools for the spring planting of the White House kitchen garden. The garden is a tangible symbol of Mrs. Obama's effort to help families make healthier food choices and to create healthier school environments, particularly with regard to school meals.

The U.S. first lady also recently launched the “Let’s Move” initiative, aimed at reducing childhood obesity in the United States. She often visits schools and talks with youngsters about the importance of education, volunteer work and community service.

Mrs. Calderón is known for her work to promote gender equality, improve services for migrant children and support low-income families.

According to White House press secretary Robert Gibbs, the first lady’s international agenda amplifies President Obama’s commitment to advancing mutual interests, mutual respect and mutual responsibility between nations and peoples around the world.

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